ARE THE WORKINGMEN SATISFIED?

Canadian Artizans Have Not a Fair Share of the Good Times.

Expansion of Trade is not Making Them Rich—The High Cost of Living—Government's Injustice.

The great questions that naturally come into the minds of workingmen, mechanics, labourers are these:

While the enormous prosperity of the whole world during the past three years, after seven years of depression, has given some prosperity to Canada, have the wage and salary earners got anything like a share of the prosperity?

Are wages as high as they might fairly be?

It is contended by the Conservatives that the unsettling trade policy of the Liberals, the giving away for nothing of a preferential tariff to the manufacturers of Manchester and Birmingham, has virtually taken the bread out of the of Canada's working men and women.

If the Conservatives were in power to-day in Canada, the manufacturers would know what to expect. The market here would not be given away to fill the mouths of people who do not work in Canada. In other words, if the Conservatives had been in power in Canada the manufacturers would have been able to give to the workingmen a share of the world's boom.

And while the workingmen have thus been handicapped by the Laurier Government their living expenses have been increased almost in every case by the folly of the Laurier Government.

Coal oil is dearer by 62 per cent.
Sugar is dearer by 30 per cent.
Paints are dearer by 30 per cent.
Thread is dearer by 25 per cent.
Gray Cotton is dearer by 10 to 15 per cent.
Bleached Cotton is dearer by 10 to 15 per cent.
Coloured Cotton is dearer by 10 to 15 per cent.
Stockings are dearer by 10 to 15 per cent.
Linens are dearer by 10 to 15 per cent.
Boots and shoes are dearer by 15 to 25 per cent.
Clothing is dearer by 15 per cent.
Wall Paper is dearer by 10 per cent.
Furniture is dearer by 10 per cent.
Stoves are dearer by 30 per cent.

Tinware is dearer by 25 per cent.
Common Crockery is dearer by 25 per cent.
Common Glassware is dearer by 25 per cent.
Bed Ticking is dearer by 12 per cent.
Gray Flannel is dearer by 10 per cent.
Brooms are dearer by 40 per cent.

The past four years are pictured as Canada's great growing time by the Liberal press and Liberal orators; as a period when the land flowed with milk and honey, when wages were high, work plentiful and the people prospered.

Let us examine the matter.

CREDIT TO WHOM CREDIT IS DUE.

The great development of the coal industry in Cape Breton and the boom in the Sault Ste. Marie district are pointed to as illustrations of prosperity.

The development of the Cape Breton coal mines commenced years ago, and the Whitney Syndicate, so-called, was in full operation under the beneficent encouragement of the National Policy, before the Liberal party was in power at Ottawa. The development of the iron and steel industry here was also due to the National Policy, and work now in progress at Sydney would be stopped at once if the Liberal Government carried out their pledges to eliminate every vestige of protection from the tariff. The bustle at Sault Ste. Marie is due to the fact that the late Government constructed a splendid new canal there, completed and in operation before they left office.

But let us look into the general state of the country during the past four years. It is true that the Trade and Commerce returns show that the Dominion imported for home consumption $44,085,298 more value of goods in 1899, the last full year for which returns are published, than in 1896; that in 1899 the value of Canada produce exported was $27,652,987 more than in 1896.

Where did this money go? Not into the pockets of the workingmen of Canada.

The increase in value of imports simply means, not that our people were able to purchase a greatly increased quantity of foreign goods, but that we had to pay a much larger price for what we did buy. That the cost of living or carrying on business was just about increased to that extent among those who used imported goods of any kind.

So far as the exports are concerned, the foreign price of some of the articles of export were enhanced, and this makes the showing a fair one, though the rate of increase is disappointingly small, being out of all proportion to the growth of the trade in the countries we deal with.

As far as the workingmen were concerned, it will be found that the export of manufactured goods was only $2,341,323 more than in 1896, when the world was just recovering from a depression that was one of the longest and most wide-spread the world had ever suffered from. Why, during the last year of the late Government's term, when this depression was in full blast, and prices were so low, the exports of manufactures showed an increase of over a million and a half above the previous year. Had this rate been maintained the increase would have been double what it actually has been,

CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS.

But can any statistics prove to the working people of Canada that the reign of the present Government has made them rich—that is, the workingmen, not the Government?

Is the cost of living less? Do you get higher wages? Do you need tables of figures to show you that you have to pay more for what you eat, drink and wear than you did when the late Government were in power?

Let each householder look into the facts for himself and ask his wife about the household expenses. The few who have been fortunate enough to get any increase of wages or any more work have found the increase more than eaten up by the enlarged cost of keeping body and soul together.

Let clerks and labourers, barbers, drivers, mechanics and artisans ask themselves and ask each other how much more they are earning than in 1896.

Are plumbers and steamfitters receiving very much greater employment at higher wages than they were four years ago? Or is it not a fact that many places have to put their men on short time owing to lack of orders?

Go into the rolling mills, and such iron and steel working industries, which were so especially encouraged by the late Government, is the hum of prosperity upon them? Or is it not a fact that some have had periods of idleness, that some are now talking about closing down, and when they re-open, if they do, will only run with a small staff, owing to lack of orders?

Ask the machine shop men if work and wages are not actually getting less. If they do not know instances where the decline in wages and increase in cost of living have not compelled people

to draw their savings out of the bank to help eke out a living?

Do not pattern-makers have to perform more work for the same, or even less, wages than they formerly received? Is not the same true of the engineers, the boiler-makers and many other trades?

Do the bricklayers not find work very uncertain and wages no higher? Is it not a fact that they practically do not manage to get more than six months' work in a year now?

Has the increased cost of living made the various mechanics named, and many others that might be named, feel happier, better, more contented with their lot in life and their homes in this country?

Has the policy of the present Government made the past four years "a growing time," "the time of the full pocket"? Has it made the working men rich?

Has it helped the poor people, the working people, the clerks and smaller householders, in the towns and cities, any more than it has the farmers in the country to have to pay 10 cents a gallon more for coal oil than they did four years ago? We have to thank the present Government for enabling the huge Standard Oil monopoly to get their feet in, and we therefore have to stand by and patiently see our oil wells pass into their hands or under their control, and the price of oil made 25 cents a gallon to us, when it formerly was 15 cents, and is now sold in the United States for 10 cents.

INJUSTICE TO THE WORKMEN.

The present Government have openly admitted and practiced the policy of treating the working man—that is, the labourer—as a being worthy less consideration than those in other walks of life. For instance, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in the second session of the present Parliament, said: "We announced on the floor of Parliament last session that no member of the civil service, whether of the inside or the outside, would be dismissed except for cause. We declared that every man against whom a charge was brought would have an opportunity of defending himself before a court of enquiry. . . . What we have done and are doing we shall continue to do. We shall dismiss no man except for cause, every charge shall be investigated and justice be done."

Three weeks later, Hon. Mr. Blair, the Minister of Railways and Canals, announced in Parliament that he would not be bound by it in the case of ordinary mechanics and labourers. He had discharged such from the employ of the Government railway, without any enquiry, and said: "I have not felt that I was called upon to enter into very elaborate enquiries as to whether a workman on this system had been guilty—to have it proved by formal evidence at all events to me—that a man had been guilty of any political offence in order to entitle him to be dismissed." In the case of other men there must be something proved, but in the case of an ordinary mechanic or labourer, the complaint of a member of Parliament supporting the Government was all that was considered necessary.

Is employment not as dear to a labouring man as to any one else? Is he any less entitled to a fair hearing before being dismissed, because he perhaps will be less able to bear the effect of losing his employment? Is the labourer to be reduced to the level of a slave, who can be dismissed by his employer at his own sweet will without any reason being given? Is this the kind of example the Government of Canada should set to other employers of labour?

The example set by Mr. Blair was followed by Mr. Tarte, in the Public Works; Mr. Sifton, in the Interior; Mr. Mulock, Postmaster-General; Mr. Paterson, Minister of Customs—all going to show that the Government had deliberately decided that a labourer was not entitled to the same consideration given other men.

Now that there is an election in the wind, we are told how great an affection the Laurier Government has for the workingmen of Canada. The interest is of very recent date. How have they legislated for the workingman, and how have they carried out legislation affecting the workingman?

A CASE IN POINT.

In the first session of the present Parliament a bona-fide Alien Labour bill was introduced by Mr. Taylor, of South Leeds. It was the exact counterpart of the law which the United States applies so aggravatingly to Canadian workingmen venturing within its jurisdiction. To snatch the credit from Mr. Taylor, who had exerted himself for years in the workingman's behalf, another bill was introduced in the name of Mr. Cowan, the Liberal member for South Essex. In the hands of the Government this latter measure finally evolved into what to-day goes by the name of the Canadian Alien Labour Act. By its very terms its enforcement was restricted. Sir Louis Davies would not permit it to come into operation in the Maritime Provinces, and it was so

drawn up as to fall short of that part of Canada. Its provisions affecting the other parts of Canada almost similarly locked it into inaction. Nothing could be done by a private prosecutor. To get the machinery of the law into motion the Solicitor-General had to be moved. He might or might not take action. His help could not be invoked unless there happened to be in the locality an agent appointed to receive complaints of violations of the law. There was an agent appointed in Toronto. Complaints were made to him that foreigners were being brought in from the United States to replace Canadian workingmen. Proceedings were begun under the Act in certain cases, but they came to nothing. In other cases it was found impossible to initiate action. At all events the law was practically a dead letter, the only evidence that it had any life being the amount inserted in the estimates for paying the persons holding offices under it. But Sir Wilfrid Laurier thought it not quite dead enough. He agreed, while in Washington representing the country on the Joint High Commission, to withdraw the law altogether. So it was taken out of the way. Thus all we got from the Act was harder measure for our own workmen. It never prevented foreigners from trooping in here to take the bread out of the mouths of our own people, but, being the semblance of a law against Americans, it exasperated our neighbours and made them harsher in the enforcement of their Alien Labour Act against Canadian workmen.

Besides leaving our men exposed to the competition of men whose services were contracted for in a foreign market, the Government cut down the duties of American products so as to increase the imports from across the line by more than $35,000,000 per annum. Articles produced by American workmen took the place of articles produced by our own workmen.

For many articles required in the public service, the Government itself went to the United States instead of favouring home labour.

GOVERNMENT WORK FOR AMERICANS.

For locomotives for the Intercolonial Railway it sent to Philadelphia and other American cities, letting our own works be closed up for lack of orders.

Yukon supplies that could have been got from Canadian manufactories, the product of Canadian labour, it purchased in the United States.

To that country it went for the very Dominion notes that form so important a part of the money of the country.

Our postage stamps are turned out by a foreign concern. Canadian industry and skill are of little account in the eyes of this Government.

Mr. Sifton has been paying $5 a head for shiploads of Doukhobors and Galicians, whom he represents to be intending farm settlers, but who prove to be needy labourers ready to work here for wages on which a decent Canadian would starve.

When the Grand Trunk Railway strike was on, the Government could not be induced to move a hand to help the men. Thanks, chiefly, to Mr. E. F. Clarke, a prominent Conservative, that strike was finally brought to an end.

In vain, too, the striking miners in the Slocan besought the Government's intercession, as did the striking salmon canners on the Fraser.

What have the repeated appeals of the workingmen of British Columbia against Chinese labour availed? They got Sir Wilfrid's sacred promise to practically exclude the Chinese, and they got an Act which will not stop a single Mongolian.

Last of the frauds on the workingman is Mr. Mulock's Conciliation Act. It is even emptier than the empty Alien Labour Act. It creates nothing, devises nothing, but simply permits what was free to everybody before. Since it came into force we have had the strike on the Fraser, a strike of the railway boiler-makers, a strike on the Western and Pacific sections of the C. P. R., a big strike of cotton mill hands, and sundry smaller strikes, and the Conciliation Act had as little effect on them as it had on the weather.

The humbugged, victimised wage-earner is asked by the Laurierite to regard as his benefactor the Government that has thus treated him.